

58
A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF EMERSON HOUSE IN THE TRAINING
AND SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS DURING THE PERIOD
FROM SEPTEMBER 1947 THROUGH JANUARY 1950

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Significance of Study.....	3
Purpose of Study.....	3
Scope.....	3
Method of Procedure.....	3
II. DESCRIPTION OF THE AGENCY.....	5
Agency Aims and Objectives.....	7
Program of the Agency.....	8
Staff Structure.....	11
III. METHODS OF TRAINING AND SUPERVISION AND EVIDENCES OF THEIR USE.....	13
Orientation.....	15
Individual Conferences.....	17
Training Courses.....	22
Supervision Through Observation.....	26
Group Supervision.....	27
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	29
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	32

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of Study

Volunteers are the inheritors of a great tradition. Before the Case Worker, before the Group Worker, before the Agency Executive, there was the volunteer. And the volunteer was social work. Volunteers were the pioneers who with crusading zeal gave heart, hand, mind and voice to the task of pricking and stirring the social conscience of their times to the community's responsibility for the health and welfare of its citizens.¹

The above statement is indeed significant as to the role that volunteers have played in the development of social work. The position of the volunteer in social work was somewhat altered by the appearance on the scene of the professionally trained social worker, yet the importance of the volunteer to social agencies did not diminish. Not so long ago the volunteer was as far removed from the social scene in America as the total population was from the realities of war. Her heart was in the right place, she wanted to help, but no one gave her credit for more than a superficial attitude. No one took the trouble to devise efficient method of employing her services and thereby advancing her usefulness and wisdom.²

Now in 1950 the status of the volunteer has changed.

¹To Have and To Hold Volunteers (Community Chest and Councils Inc.) New York, (n.d.), p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 2.

Agencies have learned that volunteers can make useful contributions, directly, through rendering actual direct service to the people and interpretation to the community, and indirectly, through the understanding and knowledge they may acquire of general and specific social work philosophy, standards, structure and methods. Emerson House, a neighborhood center in Chicago, Illinois, shares this attitude as to the importance of having volunteers in the agency and as to their usefulness. The agency operates on the principle that the volunteer has much to offer in the line of service and that time spent in the training and supervision of the volunteer is justified through the realization that they are rendering a worthwhile service.

The volunteers that came to Emerson House were from three main sources. They were referred there by the Volunteer Bureau of the Welfare Council of Chicago, by various schools and colleges in the Chicago area who saw the service as a means of increasing the growth and experience of their students, and by friends and former volunteers of the agency who were able to convince others that worthwhile work was being done by the agency. In all except possibly the latter source only a sketchy picture was given upon referral of what was expected of them by the particular agency to which they were referred. Emerson House therefore, had a job of interpreting the service given by the agency and also of giving some understanding of the job the volunteer was to perform. The volunteers came from a variety of experiences and with varying skills and abilities, along

with these attributes was the desire to be of help in doing a meaningful job in the agency. This was a continuous process which went on as long as the volunteer remained with the agency. This integration was done through the processes of training and supervision.

Purpose of Study

This is a study which showed the methods used by Emerson House in the training and supervision of volunteers. It will also show evidences of the use of training and supervision on the quality of service given by the volunteers.

Scope

This study was limited to the training and supervision of volunteers who served Emerson House in the capacity of group leaders during a two and a half year program period.

Method of Procedure

The material used in this study was secured by various methods. First, a questionnaire was sent to both present and past volunteers. This was used as a means of discovering just what type of training and supervision they had received and areas in which more of the same would have been valuable. Second, record material of groups led by volunteers was used to show use made of the supervisory experience. Third, record material of supervisory conferences was valuable in determining what the conference consisted of and their value to the group

leader. Fourth, reference material in the form of books and pamphlets was used as a means of substantiating conclusions and data.

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF THE AGENCY

Emerson House was established and incorporated in 1911. Rhoda Leach of the Gads Hill Center with the aid of local business men established the first Emerson House on the corner of Race and Wood Street. At that time Race Street was known as Emerson Avenue and this served as the source for the name of the house. Emerson House has moved several times since it was first incorporated. Since, October, 1938, its new building on the corner of Wood and Erie Streets had been in use.

When the agency moved to its present location, a gradual change took place in the nationality of the members of the agency. Before the neighborhood had been almost entirely Italian. The move to Erie Street put the house within reach of a large Polish district. There has been in the area a decrease in the number of foreign born whites. Though the number born in foreign countries was decreasing the percentage of the total population born abroad was high. The population came generally from Central Europe. Those nationalities most rapidly leaving the area were Irish, German, Austrian and Russian. There was an increasing Negro population in the Southwest corner of the area.

The area was generally a residential district. Most of the houses were small cottages, two or three flat buildings in frame and occasionally brick. The houses were in various stages

of disrepair. Many of the lots had houses in the rear as well as in the front. Parkways were limited and very poorly kept. Trees of any size were scarce. Throughout the residential district were small grocery and candy stores, occasional shoe and repair shops and many taverns. There was a manufacturing district bordering the area on the Southwest. Many of the factories here served other communities and do not depend upon the immediate area for support.

In April 1949, there was a merger of the work, staff and the boards of the Chicago Commons Association and the Emerson House Association under the name and charter of Chicago Commons Association with continuing work in both locations and service to a wider community. The two houses functioned under unified direction with combined financial resources. This gave the opportunity to help meet more effectively and efficiently, with the cooperation of neighbors, volunteers and contributors, the challenging need of this great cosmopolitan area on the northwest side of Chicago, close to the center of the city.¹ Emerson House was about a mile north and west of Chicago Commons. The needs of the two neighborhoods were very closely related therefore making their working together an advantage. There were also many changes in the offing for the communities which made the logic behind the merger sound. These changes were:

1. Changes in the number and character of the residential

¹Taken from Announcement of the Merger, April, 1948.

population, and the effect of community planning, especially of slum clearance and redevelopment.

2. Changes in the demands and needs of the population and in the concept of settlement functions.
3. Necessary changes resulting from a critical evaluation of settlement work and its location in the city.¹

Whatever the changes were which would take place Emerson House and Chicago Commons felt that there should be an abandonment of the large institution type of settlement and that work should be done toward having a number of small centers spread over the area, strategically located, and under unified direction. It was felt that this type of organization would give strength to the small center that it would not otherwise have had.

Agency Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the settlement as an instrument of social welfare had not materially changed, but the methods of work had been altered. These changes were due in part to the development of greater knowledge and higher skills in the field of community service. Most of the changes had taken place as a result of changes in the neighborhood needs and demands. It can be said that one of the objectives of a neighborhood center is "to constantly study and evaluate the needs and demands of the people in the neighborhood consciousness."² The settlement

¹Taken from the Proposal of the Merger, December, 1947.

²From statement of objectives of the agency presented at Staff Meeting of the agency January 19, 1950.

was in a position because of its closeness to the people it served to become aware of needs soon after they became evident. For this reason the settlement had as one of its main functions discovery of needs. Though the place of the settlement today is often questioned, many of the functions once performed by it have been taken over by other welfare agencies, it still serves as a demonstration laboratory for pointing up needs.

The usefulness of the settlement was once measured by the number of services which it rendered to the people living within the radius of its influence. "The test of its service is now based on the number of needs which the neighborhood itself may be taught to meet in an organized way."¹ In line with this another objective of the agency as stated in the minutes of a staff meeting was:

To provide for the best possible conditions under which individuals can have an experience in developing their individual capacities, thereby not only in meeting their own needs, but increasing their capacities to be concerned with problems of their surroundings, in the family, among friends, and larger groups of the community.²

The agency saw the social group as an important tool in carrying out this objective.

Program of the Agency

The program offered by Emerson House was determined to

¹Eduard Lindeman, The Community (New York, 1921), p. 161.

²From statement of objectives of the agency presented at Staff meeting of the agency September 13, 1948.

some extent by the physical equipment available. The facilities of the agency on the first floor were a large nursery room used for classes and groups as well as for the nursery school, a staff dining room available for older girl's clubs. In the basement there was a large club room which could be divided in two by folding doors, a cooking room, and an arts and crafts room. On the second floor there was a council room. The facilities mentioned above were those that could be used by club groups. Because of the size of the house only five groups could be comfortably handled at one time. The compact yet flexible space of Emerson House made possible the development of a number of small groups under skilled leadership. A close community relationship was developed because of the smallness of the groups which made it possible for leaders of groups to become well acquainted with the group members.

Emerson House served groups of all ages from the three year old to a group of aged people over sixty-five years of age. The nursery school opened at eight-thirty in the morning and that program continued until two-thirty in the afternoon. It served children from three through four years of age. These children were registered and taken as vacancies occurred out of an enrollment of thirty. They were taken on the basis of the need to have a group association rather than on the fact that their mothers were working.

The afternoon program of Emerson House served children five through twelve years of age. These children were enrolled at

the beginning of the year and were placed in friendship and interest groups. To some extent the staff determines the groups to which they were assigned. The enrollment of the club and interest groups ranged from five through twenty. The children came to the agency for one club meeting per week. Friday was set aside by the agency for interest groups. There were five such groups meeting. They were: a dance group, a craft group, a sewing group, a wood shop group for boys and an art group. The members of these groups could also belong to club groups that met on other days. Each of these groups were trying to carry out the objectives of the agency through the group work process.

The evening program of Emerson House served teen-agers and adults. They came to the agency for club groups also. The program of the particular groups were under the leadership of paid staff members, others were led by volunteers.

The following statistics show the numbers included in the program of Emerson House during the months of November and December 1947, 1948 and 1949. Though only two months were given the table gives some idea of the scope of the program.

TABLE 1

**STATISTICAL REPORT FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1947-48-49
SHOWING ACTIVITIES AND ATTENDANCE**

	November			December		
	1947	1948	1949	1947	1948	1949
Clubs						
Number	22	27	30	22	27	37
Sessions	77	65	103	36	58	73
Attendance	538	774	734	319	510	533
Classes						
Number	4	8	5	5	8	5
Attendance	187	293	301	141	283	183
Interest Groups						
Number	10	2	2	13	9	5
Attendance	208	135	217	415	111	129

In addition to the club and interest groups mentioned above there were classes in English and Citizenship which were sponsored by the board of education, also sewing classes under the same sponsorship.

Staff Structure

The merger of Emerson House and Chicago Commons has combined the two houses under one general executive who serves both agencies along the line of overall program director. There were three full time staff workers at Emerson House. One was the head resident who had charge of the administrative aspects and carried on the community organization aspect of the agency's program which included making contacts with other agencies in the community. A nursery director was responsible

for that part of the agency's program. There was also a program director at Emerson House. The program director had under her supervision three part time staff people who worked from twenty to thirty hours per week. This completed the paid part time staff of the group work section of the agency's program.

It can easily be seen from this picture of the paid staff of the agency that the bulk of the program performed by this department was done by volunteers. Consideration was given to the number of volunteers used by the agency. The number used depended largely upon the amount of staff time that could be used in giving adequate supervision.

CHAPTER III

METHODS OF TRAINING AND SUPERVISION AND EVIDENCES OF THEIR USE

Emerson House attempted to establish a meaningful relationship with its volunteers. Emerson House was aware of the fact that the agency that accepted volunteer service was under obligation to provide their volunteers with work that was satisfying and to supply competent supervision, to award demonstrated capacity with suitable promotion, and to strive to make the agency-volunteer relationship in all of its aspects an opportunity for growth and creative expression.¹ It should be evident that in any agency setting the contribution of the volunteer worker would vary in direct proportion to the breadth of experience that the agency had provided. If the experience had included an opportunity to learn about the agency's program in relation to human needs, as well as to perform specific duties, volunteers would be able to make a more meaningful contribution to the agency and to the total community. These contributions would be made through the volunteers own development and growth as informed and socially minded citizens, through their ability to educate others in the community and through their purposive activities directed toward

¹Natalie W. Linderholm, Volunteers in Social Work, Social Work Year Book 1937, (Chicago, 1937), p. 537.

strengthening community social services.¹ The agency that supervised its volunteers in an adequate way would find itself possessing a group of volunteers who were prompt, reliable and efficient because of the understanding which they had of their job; a group of potential board members who would know the methods of the agency because they had worked in it; and a group of intelligent and enthusiastic interpreters because they would have voluntarily been a part of something which they enjoyed doing.² The training and supervision that the volunteers received should be thoughtfully planned in accordance with the assignment for volunteers, the qualifications of the available volunteer workers and the agencies objectives in enlisting them.

Training and supervision are usually high on the staff list of responsibilities in working with volunteers. At Emerson House the training and supervision was provided at the level where the volunteer was with consideration for his conflicts and his adjustment to the situation. It was felt that this approach aided in working with the volunteer toward achievement of the agency objectives as he could accept and understand them. The supervisor, therefore, began his role of supervision at the level of the volunteer's experience and accepted him as

¹Dorothy L. Sills, "Volunteers in Social Service," (National Traveler's Aid Association), 1947, p. 30.

²Mrs. Thomas L. Tolan, "A Study of Volunteer Bureaus in the U. S." (n.p.) (New York, 1937), p. 5.

a member of the staff in relation to his maturity and life experience. At every level of practice, individuals need help on the job and through supervision continuous help is given.

Training provided the basic aspects of leadership, whereas supervision overlaps with the refinements and details of the job.¹ A more exact definition of training would be the transmission of such pertinent knowledge and methods as have proved useful in carrying out specific kinds of responsibilities.² Supervision may be defined as the process by which a skilled person works with another who is less well equipped to promote the development of knowledge, understanding and skills. The person's integration and use of these in carrying out assignments is to insure a desirable quality of service.

Orientation

When the volunteer worker came to the agency he had in most instances had only a very limited knowledge of what was expected of him or what he could expect from the agency. In the orientation process, volunteers should be fully informed regarding the philosophy, program and policies of the agency.³

¹Supervision - A Job for Two (Girl Scouts National Organization) (n.p.) New York, (n.d.), p. 4.

²Dorothy L. Sills, op. cit., p. 30.

³Arthur Swift, "Training of Group Leaders On the Job," The Group, (New York) (n.d.), p. 52.

Without a certain amount of such pertinent information along with other phases of orientation the volunteer would not be prepared to function adequately in the setting. In addition, the volunteer's value to the community in education and interpretation, as well as in active support of the agency and community services, would depend upon the opportunities provided through the orientation process for acquiring accurate information and sound understanding. Emerson House was not always able to get all of its volunteers at the beginning of the program period, therefore, an orientation course for all workers was practically impossible. A personal interview with the supervisor and an opportunity to observe all phases of an agency's program would pay dividends in interest and intelligent performance. Emerson House used this method as a means of beginning orientation with new volunteers.

The following statement was taken from a questionnaire, twenty of which were sent to Emerson House volunteers. One of the volunteers who received the type of orientation mentioned above shows how the volunteer found knowledge of the economic conditions of the community and an interpretation of family life given during the orientation period helpful in working with her group.

The main difficulty that I had in getting the group started was the desire for personal recognition on the part of most of the members which caused them to swing from the water pipes on the ceiling, throw chairs and have general confusion at all times. This was merely a starvation for affection. Understanding the economic and domestic situation of families in the area, the problem became an apparent thing the cause being so obvious.

The worker here was better able to understand individuals in the group and the behavior problems they presented. This might not have been so had she not had some insight into the community and family background before meeting her group.

Individual Conferences

The basic purposes of all supervisory conferences is the improvement of workers and through them the program experience of the participants.¹ It is an educational process with an aim toward self-appraisal, self-analysis, and self-approval. In case work and formal education the method has been successfully used for many years and is considered one of the most valuable supervisory techniques. Supervisors of group work place a similarly high value on the individual conference, but it cannot be said that they use it with the regularity and planning that they should.²

The main values of regular supervisory conferences as seen by supervisors may be summarized as follows:

1. it strengthens the cooperative relationship between the worker and the supervisor;
2. it enables the supervisor to point up the basic objectives of the program;
3. it gives an opportunity to raise questions and get help with particular problems;
4. it stimulates the worker to analyze his growth and development;

¹Hedley S. Dimock and Harleigh B. Trecker, The Supervision of Group Work and Recreation (New York, 1949), p. 133.

²Ibid., p. 132.

5. it gives the supervisor a chance to gain understanding of how the worker feels about his success or failure with the group;
6. it affords a channel for the supervisor to make resource suggestions;
7. it provides an opportunity for the supervisor to help the worker individualize the program;
8. it enables the supervisor to learn about current developments within the group and thus keep abreast with the group.¹

The following statement is taken from a volunteer's questionnaire answer. It shows the use of the conference in helping a volunteer with a particular problem that was causing concern.

In the beginning I was too strict with the group. This was because I was a little unsure of myself and unable to give the children as much freedom as they should have had. It was easier to handle them when they walked down the street in twos for example; I kept them in twos even when it was completely unnecessary. Through experience and discussion with my supervisor I gained confidence in myself and was better able to handle this problem of feeling insecure with the group.

The following is a supervisor's evaluation of a worker which gives a picture of one of the agency's student volunteer worker's performance with a group. The evaluation was helpful in analysis of his growth and development.

The student was assigned to the role of group leader with a group of eleven and twelve year old boys. There were twelve members of the group. The type of program was informal activities. The student has been very enthusiastic in his work and has related well with the children. At first there was a tendency to do for the children rather than work with them. There has been some improvement shown in this area and more responsibility given the group for decisions concerning program and plans for the club. The student's feelings of needing to be accepted by members of the group interferes with his ability to impose limitations. His

¹Ibid., pp. 132-133.

understanding of the importance of limitations has increased and he is now beginning to apply this knowledge. He has been able to work well with the rest of the staff and has been quite eager to receive supervisory help. There is still some difficulty in seeing members as individuals and there is still a tendency to generalize about them. The student has shown capacity for furthering his understanding and knowledge of working with people and has made application of his learnings in school.

The above evaluation of the student was gone over with him in a supervisory conference. The discussion provided the student an opportunity to see areas he still needed help in as well as areas in which he was having success. The method used was especially important to the student who planned to later study group work.

The supervisory conference also gave the supervisor a picture of just how the worker felt about his success or failure with the group. The supervisor, with this understanding was able to help the volunteer in working through his feelings. Especially was this important when there was concern over failure with the group. The following is an excerpt from a supervisory conference record in which the worker was expressing his negative reactions and in which the supervisor helped the worker work through these feelings. In this situation the worker feared the possibility of having a failure with the group.

Miss T. arrived late cutting short the time for the conference. To set her at ease I said that she had had a swell crowd last week. She agreed but said that she didn't expect them to come back. I said they seemed to be having fun last week and that that might encourage them to come back. Then I asked whether or not program suggestions came from the group at all. She said they wanted to have a party but she would not let them. On answering why, she said it was bound to be a flop. I asked would it be possible for them to learn something

if it were a flop. She said with conviction that there was no chance. I said that some clubs learn through flops that planning is necessary. Then she said they just wanted to dance and that she wondered where they could get boys that were old enough.

The worker's fear of failure here was relieved to the extent that after this conference she was able to consider the party in a different light and was able to work with the group on it.

The following excerpt from a supervisory record gives an indication of the supervisor offering resource material to a volunteer worker.

Mr. B. said that he didn't have too many craft ideas. I said that he had access to the card files of crafts and games. He said that he would like to see it. He poured over it with delight for twenty minutes, asking advice and taking down hints. Mr. B. had not been able to get through the entire file before it was time for him to leave, but he asked if he could continue next week. When he left I explained that the file would be available to him at any time.

The preceding paragraphs point out examples of the use of the supervisory conference in relation to the values of supervision as seen by the supervisors of volunteer group leaders. There should be regularly scheduled conferences with each volunteer in the agency. Emerson House because of its limited staff was not equipped to schedule regular conferences with each individual leader. Thus through the value of the individual conference in relation to each volunteer worker's service it was only possible for a few of the workers to have weekly conferences, yet each volunteer was assured that he could receive help from staff members along any line that would interest him at any time he wished.

Regular, frequent, planned consultation periods would involve problems of discipline, program suggestions, equipment, more knowledge of community resources and a need to know more about individual group members. The following is a summary record of the supervision of one of the agency's volunteers which shows how a problem of discipline was handled through supervision given as the need arose.

The relationship between Mrs. E. and her supervisor has been very haphazard up to Christmas. Before that time there had only been brief conferences before and after the meetings which were not satisfactory because of the lack of time and lack of privacy. Usually the discussion centered around program, either ideas she had regarding it or what she wanted in the line of materials for the next week.

Mrs. E. comes to club each week with a full program planned, which goes over as well as it does largely because of her enthusiasm for what she has planned and her determination that the group shall have a good time. The planning done, however, is definitely hers, and not the groups which is one angle that I have felt I would like most to help her with. Recently she has come to see this and I have been able to make suggestions that the group be given an opportunity to make some decisions as to what they would like to do etc. For instance an Indian project was her idea, but she was able to draw the group along with her in becoming interested in choosing Indian names. One day she mentioned that she was going to have an Indian Council meeting and she hoped that they would set down rules for their behavior. I felt that she was getting at the idea that decisions should come from the group rather than from her. I suggested that she put the questions of rules in such a manner as "what kinds of things does the Indian Council decide about?" - leaving up to them rather than putting the question as she originally did - "how should we punish an Indian brave who talks when he isn't supposed to do so?" She readily accepted this sort of suggestion and incorporated it, but her whole orientation seems to be such that she plans and thinks for the group rather than feel deeply that the responsibility is with the group. There is one other area of supervision other than those mentioned which supervision of Mrs. E. has included. This is one of interpretation of what she can expect as behavior, acceptance of limitations, conditions under which children

in the area live, etc. This is of course related to her own life experiences which have taught her that children should behave and be made to behave. Thus on several occasions she has sent children home for offenses which in my eyes have not been offenses at all, and this has been accompanied by phone calls from parents as to what has happened, resentment and hostility from the children, and a general withdrawal of freedom from the group.

Training Courses

Training in an agency should be planned in accordance with the assignments for volunteers, the qualifications of the volunteers available and the objectives of the agency in enlisting them.¹ The primary purpose of such training should be to stimulate the growth of the workers in educational insights and skills. It was always helpful when the volunteers could participate in the planning of the leader's course, because it gave the leaders a sense of proprietorship in their own growth, and thus inspired enthusiasm on the part of the leader. It also helped to keep the focus and content of the meeting close to the worker's needs. As one volunteer said many of the things volunteers need to know and understand are oftentimes so integrated into staff thinking that it is difficult for the staff to remember that they are not generally familiar and understood.² The training course should be carefully planned. Evidence of careful planning tends to increase the

¹Dorothy L. Sills, op. cit., p. 30.

²Ibid.

worker's sense of significance in what he is doing.¹ The meetings should provoke participation from each member. This does, however, suggest that effective learning involves lively reaction on the part of the learners and that meetings in which the major activity for the majority of the participants is to "set, look and listen are likely to be low in their stimulation quotient."² The spirit that prevails during a training course should be free from fears and insecurities or repression, so that expression will be natural and spontaneous.

Emerson House ideally would like to have two training courses during the program year, one would be held in the fall and the other in the spring. For the past three years only one such course has been held. This course involved both volunteers who had already been involved in group leadership along with those who had only recently been assigned to the agency. The volunteers were informed of the training course well in advance. In 1950, questionnaires were given to each of the volunteers which listed some of the areas that might be of interest to them. The areas which they felt would be most beneficial were checked. An excerpt from a record written by a volunteer whose first contact with the agency was through the training course, shows the volunteer's reaction to the course and also points out some of the items covered in the

¹Hedley S. Dimock and Harleigh Trecker, op. cit., p. 167.

²Ibid., p. 169.

session:

Today was my first time at Emerson House, and we had a splendid party. I was invited to go to the staff and volunteer workers party and meeting in order to get acquainted with everyone connected with Emerson...and to learn some of their methods and techniques. I shall go Wednesday to have my first class in creative drama with fifteen nine, ten and eleven year olds, and I am anxious and apprehensively anticipating it. I gained a lot of knowledge about the neighborhood, the center itself, and the people with whom I shall work. Several important facts about the community are: it is predominately Italian and Polish; most of the people are Catholic, vote democratic, and are in the lower middle class economic grouping; it is not a tenement area, although it is very crowded (ten thousand people live in the sixteen square blocks that the settlement house handles); some of the people are beginning to afford to move out of that vicinity and build for themselves elsewhere; the Negroes are beginning to move into the area, and one of the center's biggest problems is to help orientate the community to that fact successfully and compatibly; the center handles about 350 children at present and hopes to make that number 500 soon; the children like to come to the center and take part in its varied program; the families trust greatly the staff at Emerson and they give them pretty full range with their children.

Emerson House is only eleven years old and is in excellent condition. I was so pleased with the many facilities there; a nice playground, several large play rooms and a few smaller one, a craft shop, a small library, a kitchen and dining room, several living quarters for the regular staff, another kitchen for the children to learn to cook in, a lounge room, convenient and well equipped bathrooms, a fireplace, a stage that can be brought in, stored costumes and some marionettes, games and outdoor equipment of all sorts, etc....It is a pleasure to see such a fine physical set-up there after seeing several centers lacking so many things. They handle groups all the way from nursery school to adult classes in English speaking. They have taken care of some of the children from the time they were very little, and they keep coming back year after year for new groups. Miss Scott is the head of Emerson House, with Mr. Brueckner as superintendent.

Now the party...It was very successful and a great deal of fun. We began by playing games among ourselves that we could teach the children in our groups. Of course it helped us all to get to know each other better too, and we played as hard as any children play. Then we

began a new sort of play...called socio-drama. We acted out group problems, putting ourselves in different roles each time and experiencing reactions that we might otherwise not been aware of. We were given a particular situation and specific characters to portray; we knew little of the background of the circumstances we were going to play, and we had to assume that it may have been completely opposite to our own. We forced ourselves for a while to try to feel reflexes and emotions of children and leaders quite different from ourselves. Of course, it is most difficult to divorce your own reactions from those of the person you are pretending to be, especially in a situation where the people in the group don't all know each other. However, there certainly is much merit to this type of experiment, for rather than reading psychology of actually trying to feel as they, the children might. It comes the closest to being the most functional and vivid experience for group leaders.

We interrupted our drama often to point out certain factors concerning the play between the children and the leaders, and among the children. We tried to formulate the best ways to handle situations as they came up; the discussion was very interesting and informative. This game helped our group to feel each other out too, and I'm sure we all learned many things about one another that we wanted to know. After our drama, we had a fine dinner which a friend came in to cook for us. I liked very much being there among the other workers at Emerson House, and I liked the fact that we had played, learned, eaten...and soon would work together. I am going to eat meals there whenever I go to teach because it is difficult for me to get to Evanston in time for dinner at my house. Miss Scott was kind enough to invite me to have dinner with the staff at Emerson House and I will like eating there...and then going up to a quiet room and typing these diaries. The continuity will be good for me, and I will have more of a chance to talk to the regular workers and ask them questions about my work. I wish I had more time to spend there.

After dinner we all sat around the fireplace and sang songs for about an...it was relaxing and fun, and we learned more songs to teach our groups. I like the people that were there so much, but I shall leave descriptions of them...and my comments...until a later time when I know them better. I'm looking forward to working there, and although it is frightening to think of the responsibility I shall have with those fifteen children, it is also challenging. I hope I catch on quickly to my group...and that we teach each other many things.

From the record of the training course, volunteers were able to get a picture of the community in which they would be working, program ideas, an opportunity to meet the staff members and some knowledge of the structure of the agency. In addition, some insight was given as to what to expect in a club group. For volunteers already working in the agency this course was in-service training, nevertheless, there were valuable learnings for them which could be integrated into the group with which they were already working.

Supervision Through Observation

The aim of observation in supervision is for the cooperative improvement of workers, in order that the group may have the best possible experience. This does not go along with the idea that may be in the mind of some volunteers that this form of supervision is designed to catch the group unawares. It merely meant that in an attempt to see that the group was getting the best possible experience, the supervisor could on occasions visit the group while it was in action. There were times when the leader of the group might invite the supervisor into the group situation. On such occasions the supervisor had an opportunity to observe the program, the worker's use of control and discipline, worker's relationship to the group, participation of members, group's reactions and attitudes toward the worker, worker's ability to get his point across, and the worker's use of democratic methods.

Certain workers had special problems with which they

needed help from the supervisor. There were also emergency situations in which the leader needed on the spot assistance from the supervisor. For instance, a group might get completely out of control and the volunteer leader may be at a loss as to what to do in the situation. Volunteer leaders at Emerson House were made to feel free to call on the supervisor to give help when such situations occurred. Of the twenty questionnaires returned in connection with this study, seven of the workers had occasion to call upon the supervisor for immediate help with their groups and felt that the supervisors on the spot assistance in no way affected their relationship with the groups. The latter point would imply that the help was given in such a way that the status of the volunteer worker with the group was not changed.

Group Supervision

Group supervision was another method used in the supervisory process in working with volunteers at Emerson House. It involved a somewhat different connotation than the usual one, although the same goals were reached. The two most commonly used group methods were the training course which has already been mentioned and the staff or leader's meeting. As the term was used at Emerson House it meant the conference between the supervisor and members of the volunteer staff had the same or similar interests and motivations in giving service to the agency. This method was often used at the agency when two or more volunteers were referred from the same

source, such as a college or a high school in the area.¹ In such a case the interest of the volunteers were usually similar and through joint conferences an opportunity was provided for creative and cooperative participation in dealing with common needs and purposes. This was not one of the commonly used methods but in this setting it had been used successfully.

¹Statement made by the program director at Emerson House.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to show the methods used in the training and supervision of the volunteer workers at Emerson House, a neighborhood center in Chicago, Illinois. No attempt has been made to say whether or not the methods used were good or bad, only what they were is shown.

The conclusions drawn from the study were:

1. Because of the limited paid staff the agency had to plan carefully that the volunteers accepted by the agency get as much training and supervision as possible with the small amount of staff time available for this purpose. In the main it might be said that most of the supervision was done informally with the volunteer feeling free to talk to the supervisor on any problem or concern that might face him at a particular time. Meaningful relationships were established between the volunteer and the supervisor which allowed him to feel free to ask for such help.

2. The supervisor had an informal interview with each volunteer who was referred to the agency before placing him with a group. In this interview the volunteer worker was given an idea of the objectives of the agency policy, a picture of the program carried on by Emerson House and also some insight as to what his job with the group would be. After having been given this general information the volunteer

was given more information on the specific group with which he was to work, including interests of the group and facts about the general and individual behavior of the group. This served to further orient the volunteer worker to the agency.

3. After the beginning phases of the orientation process were completed the worker could in a week's time take over the leadership of a group. From this time on he received supervision in various forms from one of the staff workers in the agency. This might have been in the form of regularly scheduled conferences or it might have been informal chats before or after a group meeting. In addition to these methods it was hoped that the volunteer would feel free to ask for help at any time.

4. Training courses for volunteers were offered on an average of two times during the program year. These courses were planned so that all of the volunteers could be brought together to become acquainted with one another as well as to gain helpful suggestions that would enable them to function adequately in their group situation. These suggestions would be in the form of program aids, methods of handling particular behavior types, and an understanding of the setting in which the agency worked in relation to individuals and the total community.

5. Emerson House also used supervision through observation as a means of working with the volunteer in the agency. Observation was done only upon the invitation of the

volunteer. It might have been prompted either by an unusual program which the volunteer wanted the worker to observe, or the volunteer might have needed on the spot assistance in gaining control of the group. In either case the supervisor was able to observe the volunteer worker's role with the group, and also the reactions and attitudes of the group to the volunteer worker.

6. On occasions when two or more volunteers had the same interests and motivations for giving their services, group supervision was used as a method in the supervisory process. This meant that a small group of volunteers had conferences with the supervisor periodically and discussed common problems and needs.

7. Each of these methods of supervision used by Emerson House had as its objective more capable leadership by the volunteer worker through his additional understanding of the group and through his own growth as he was able to work with the group.

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